

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Mortensen, Jorgen

Jorgen Mortensen Journal, ca. 1903-1907

MS 4-39-1

17 photocopied pages

Processed By: Anastasia Tarmann, July 2010

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jorgen Mortensen was a distant relative of the donor, Thomas Gaps, believed to be a brother to his great-grandfather. It is possible that Gaps' mother may have typed the manuscript from a Danish to English translation (translated by his grandfather). The manuscript begins with Jorgen's first trip to Alaska in 1903. Jorgen probably left from the Seattle area, but the manuscript does not mention the exact location he departed, only the name of the ship, the *Senator*, and that it was headed for Nome. It appears that he traveled with his brother, who he refers to as "Mads". "Mads" was willing to travel in steerage because that was all that was available, but Jorgen did not want to travel in steerage. He found someone named McKay who had intermediate tickets but had decided not to go to Alaska. Jorgen purchased McKay's ticket and traveled under McKay's name.

Jorgen left and then returned to Alaska in 1907. He hired out as a bridge carpenter to work on the road to Seward, returning to Alaska on a ship named the *Cordova*. When they arrived at Katalla he decided to get off the boat rather than continue on to Seward because everyone else seemed to be getting off and there seemed to be "a lot of activity going on." He ended up working in the logging camps in that area for quite some time. He also worked for one of two competing groups trying to get a railroad into a coal deposit in that area. [*From donor's notes.*]

INVENTORY

17 page, typed, double spaced manuscript titled "Early Day Adventures of a Pioneer of Alaska" by Jorgen Mortensen.